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AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

The Dedication

OF

THE TOWN HALL,

IN

WORCESTER, (MASS.)

ON

The second day of May, 1825.

BY JOHN DAVIS.

Published pursuant to a vote of the Town.

Worcester:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM MANNING.

Wis Hist Soc
In Exch

Worcester, May 2, 1825.

DEAR SIR,

PURSUANT to a vote of the Inhabitants of the Town of Worcester, the undersigned, a Committee chosen for that purpose, tender to you the thanks of the Town for the appropriate Address delivered by you this day, at the opening of the Town Hall, and request of you a copy thereof for publication.

We are, Sir, respectfully, your obedient Servants,

EPHRAIM MOWER,
THOMAS CHAMBERLAIN, } *Committee.*
SAMUEL M. BURNSIDE,

JOHN DAVIS, Esq.

Worcester, May 2, 1825.

GENTLEMEN,

IF I were at liberty to consult my own feelings, I should decline complying with the request of the Town, made known to me by you, as its Committee. But as those who heard the Address have thought it expedient to give it to the public, because it contains a brief historical account of the early settlement of the Town, and some account of its proceedings during the revolutionary war,—I will place in your hands a copy, to be disposed of as the Town shall think proper.

Accept, Gentlemen, my thanks for the friendly sentiments contained in your note, and for the handsome manner in which you have communicated the vote of the Town.

I remain your Friend and obedient Servant,

JOHN DAVIS.

Capt. EPHRAIM MOWER,
Gen. THOMAS CHAMBERLAIN, } *Committee.*
SAMUEL M. BURNSIDE, Esq.

Advertisement.

THE writer of the following Address has, since it was delivered, added the Notes and Appendix, at the request of several persons, who thought that some further historical facts might be usefully connected with it. For the facts and documents, contained in the Address, he has relied principally on the town and proprietors' records. Whitney's and the Massachusetts Historical Collections, and the Rev. Dr. Bancroft's Historical Sermon, have also been examined and used as authorities. Much more, that would have been entertaining to the Historian and to the Antiquary, might have been added; but this publication is now sufficiently enlarged beyond its original dimensions.

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Address.

Fellow-Citizens,

I FEAR I shall neither meet your expectations, nor do justice to myself, as circumstances beyond my control have rendered it impossible for me to devote as much of my time to preparation as is indispensable to a creditable performance of the duty assigned me.

The occasion seems to invite a recurrence to past events, and to call for some brief notice of the early history of the Town. It is much to be regretted that there is not a more perfect history of the first settlers, giving us an account of the motives which brought them here, of the sufferings they endured, of their conflicts with the natives, of their habits of life and means of support, and of the places where they began their settlement,—as these interesting facts now rest principally on the doubtful authority of tradition. A complete history of a town like this, settled as it was at a remote period, and necessarily shewing the progress and enlargement of our simple mu-

nicipal institutions, would be most interesting and instructive, as it would enable us to comprehend more fully the moral effect of these institutions upon the inhabitants, and to determine with greater certainty to what causes to impute the stability of our government, and the happy condition of the people. We have however to lament, that hitherto a few pages only have been assigned to the history of Worcester, and those containing only a few of the leading facts. I trust, therefore, I shall be pardoned if, in the remarks I am about to submit to you, there should seem to be any deficiency in this particular.

The discovery and settlement of New-England forms one of those remarkable events which may be considered as the commencement of an important change in the character of the world; for it has been operating as a moral lever upon the nations of the earth for more than two centuries, and has produced upon them effects which promise the most auspicious results.

The Pilgrims, who landed at Plymouth in 1620, were probably distinguished above all other men for moral courage, and cool, steady, persevering fortitude. We who now live in the full enjoyment of the blessings which they beheld only in prospect, can never sufficiently appreciate that unbending adherence to principle which sustained them through all their trials. We behold with surprise that hardened courage in the soldier, which lifts him above fear, and carries him unshaken into the most deadly conflicts; but we

listen with admiration and astonishment, when we are told that an association of men, women and children, having no motives of ambition to gratify, no feelings of pride to sustain them, voluntarily quit the comforts and security of civilized life, to seek the shores of an unknown country, depending more upon a kind Providence to protect them against its savage inhabitants and severe climate, than upon any means within their own power. Yet, fabulous as it may seem, the Pilgrims did commit themselves to the wide ocean, and, after their arrival, pushed from them the ship that had borne them over; and in the midst of peril and danger, sickness and want, and almost every kind of discouragement, proceeded to establish the little colony from which has principally sprung this great and flourishing nation, with most of its free institutions. To possess a fearless courage, which can be excited by physical action, is only to share in common with others the attributes of human nature; but that fortitude which seeks a voluntary exile for conscience sake, which cannot be tempted from its enjoyment of freedom of thought and speech by the blandishments of luxury, nor driven from its purpose by the distress of poverty, sickness, and despair, is supported by principles which rise above human nature, and rest in heaven. Earthly hopes and rewards would have afforded the Pilgrims a feeble support in their days of peril and distress. Before them was the troubled ocean—behind them an immeasurable wilderness:

the sky was their covering, the snow their bed. They could hold no communication with any part of the civilized world, and had little other means of relieving their necessities except from the slender stock they had brought with them. Yet in their calamities they murmured not, but thanked God, who strengthened their hands and encouraged their hearts, and enabled them to triumph over all, and accomplish the great purposes of their migration. They and the other early settlers of Massachusetts founded institutions which have brightened the hopes of the world, and raised man (in this country at least) to the rank designed by his Creator. They were not free from error and superstition; but the monuments of their wisdom are so distinguished, that it requires the exercise of but little charity to forgive their errors. They sought, in religion, to establish the rights of conscience—in civil government, the rights of man: they considered him as a moral agent, possessing intellectual powers capable of enlargement, and of a nature formed for such associations as are necessary for his protection and happiness; and although they nominally acknowledged the supremacy of Great-Britain, yet it is obvious, from the structure of the colonial legislature, and the powers claimed by it, that they felt an early and ardent attachment to self-government.

In accordance with these sentiments, we find them abstaining from the exercise of control over their fellow-beings, by the energy of power; but

always addressing themselves to the reason and understanding, endeavouring to convince rather than compel. Their government was patriarchal; and we find their rulers conducting themselves rather as the parents and head of a great family, than as having power and authority. We find them beseeching and entreating the old and the young to embrace all opportunities for moral and religious instruction, that, by purifying the mind, they might elevate themselves above the debased and humbled condition of the world. We find them also establishing, at the public charge, free schools, for the education of youth and children, as a part of their system of government; and requiring parents, under severe penalties, to send their children to these schools, relying on moral, rather than physical power, to maintain civil and religious liberty. In this they differed from the civilians of earlier times; and understanding better the human character and the end and design of human government, they sought to make mankind happy and capable of governing themselves, by enlarging their knowledge and exalting their sentiments. Ignorance is often the parent of error and crime; and its pernicious consequences they clearly saw could best be counteracted by a general diffusion of useful knowledge. We now witness the salutary effects of these enlightened sentiments and measures. We now witness the elasticity, the overwhelming and subduing energy of intellectual power. It has spread itself over this country.

and requires the utmost watchfulness of those who rest their authority upon the physical strength of armies, to prevent its pervading and subduing Europe. Thus they laid the foundation of our national happiness and our national greatness.

We live under the dominion of the people, in the full enjoyment of a free government, which requires no other aid to support it than the popular will. It was commenced by the pilgrims, and has since been maintained and perfected by pursuing their policy. Free schools may be said emphatically to be the ark of our safety: they purify the public mind, and diminish immorality and crime: they are open to the whole public, rich and poor; and, with scarcely an exception, the people of New-England can read and write: thus they have the means of obtaining such a degree of knowledge as to comprehend their rights and preserve them; and it was on this intellectual power that our ancestors principally rested their hopes. It was through this medium that they first practically attacked and exposed the doctrine of bigots, that "the lights of philosophy must be extinguished, as dangerous to religion. It is indeed preposterous to imagine that the enlargement of the understanding, and an acquaintance with the laws that regulate the universe, can dispose to unbelief. It may be a cure for superstition: for intolerance it is a certain remedy; but a pure and true religion has nothing to fear from the greatest expansion which

the intellect can receive from study. The more science is diffused, the better will the Author of all things be known. To tyrants indeed and bad rulers, the progress of knowledge among the mass of mankind is a just object of terror: it is fatal to them and their designs. They dread the light, but will find it more easy to curse than to extinguish it. It is spreading in spite of despots, even in those countries where arbitrary power deems itself most secure;" and it is but a just tribute to the memory of the pilgrim fathers, to allow them the largest share of credit for commencing this great work of redemption.

Such is a brief, a very brief outline of the sentiments and measures of our ancestors. It cannot fail of moving the best feelings of the heart, to look back into the age in which they lived, and see them rising above the rest of the world, and, as the benefactors of mankind, establishing, with a clear-sighted intelligence, doctrines and principles which now prevail throughout this western hemisphere, and have shaken many of the thrones in the east.

France, Spain, Italy, and Germany have either been convulsed or revolutionized in their struggles to free themselves from arbitrary power; and the time will come when knowledge will triumph over that power—when the people will have dominion over themselves. That time would probably have arrived before this, had not the press been either shackled or si-

lenced, and men of letters who favoured rational opinions been either kept in awe or proscribed. There was at one period a fair prospect that the goodly work was about to commence. At the overthrow of Napoleon, the monarchs of Europe were restored to power, on condition that they should establish constitutions and representative governments. This has in general not only been shamefully disregarded, but, under the name of a holy alliance, these same monarchs have confederated, and formed a most unholy league against the liberties of the people.

Italy rose, and demanded a constitution and a popular government; but the legions of Austria silenced that demand, and upheld by the point of the bayonet the tottering throne of her imbecile monarch.

Spain established a free government, which for a time was conducted prosperously, and bid fair to endure; but France was alarmed at this innovation upon the doctrine of legitimacy and the divine right of kings, and with an overwhelming army crushed this new government, restored to his former arbitrary power the pusillanimous Ferdinand, and with him that horrid engine of cruelty and oppression, the Inquisition.

There is in Germany one, and but one, honourable exception to this breach of faith. The Grand Duke of Weimar, alike distinguished as a statesman and as a scholar, as a patron of letters and as a benefactor of mankind, fulfilled his engagements, by establishing a constitution in which

was guaranteed the liberty of the subject and of the press. Under the auspices of this new government, a few numbers of a liberal newspaper were published; but the royal Congress of Troppau constrained the Grand Duke to issue an edict suppressing the paper, and to re-organize a censorship of the press.*

These wanton, and (I think I am justified in saying) these wicked attacks upon popular governments—these attempts to suppress every expression of the sentiments of the people, coupled with the rigid censorship of the press, indicate the temper and feelings of many of the most powerful monarchs in Europe, and shew that they are aware that the dissemination of knowledge among the mass of mankind, is by them to be dreaded as the greatest of evils. Yet, not-

*The Edinburg Review was relied on as authority for this statement; but after the Address was delivered, it was put into the hands of a friend, who returned it with this note subjoined:—

"The Duke of Weimar was not the first to grant a constitution to his States, nor did he grant one on the most liberal basis.

"In the duchy of Baden a constitutional government has been organized; the King of Bavaria granted a constitution to his States, with much pomp and pretension. But the most sincere of them all was the King of Wirtemburg. He did not concede to his people the guarantee of their rights as a favour, but as a matter of right; and actually established his government as a compact between the crown and the nation. He is understood to have been much persecuted, in consequence of the liberal course pursued by him. It is even said that attempts were made to intimidate him by threats.

"Yet the Germans, who have constitutions, are not much better situated in a political point of view. Their liberty is chiefly for show, rather than a substantial good. None but the small powers have established free presses; and where they are established, liberty is still in danger, partly from the treachery of their princes, and partly from the vicinity of the despotic governments."

withstanding the armies and navies kept up in time of peace, to overawe the people—notwithstanding the arm of power has hitherto crushed every rising and smothered every liberal sentiment, and notwithstanding the press is made to speak only the language of loyalty,—yet our example is before the world, and all must yield to the principles of our ancestors. The very exertions made to check and restrain these principles shew that they have assailed despotic power, and although their progress may be retarded, they must and will eventually triumph.

Having taken this general view of the first settlement of the State, I shall now invite your attention to what more immediately concerns the Town. Among the many institutions of our ancestors which are most happily designed to uphold and perpetuate a free government, was a division of their territory into small municipalities, which were invested with powers of high trust and importance. The support of public worship, public schools, and public highways devolved on them. The police of towns has, from the earliest settlement of the Commonwealth, been purely democratic. The people have always selected their officers from among themselves, and transacted all their business in public assemblies. Aside from the influence and ascendency which are given to the sentiments of the people, by having the care of morals and of education, and the power of making

provision for the same, nothing could be more happily devised to sustain and perpetuate a republican system, than the manner in which these municipal corporations are associated and do their business. Indeed, the whole male population of our country may be said to be bred at the altar of republicanism. Our earliest associations and habits of life are connected with our schools, our churches, and our town-meetings—all of which are regulated and provided for by the people, in public assembly. It is indeed most manifest that much of the good order which prevails, and much of the security we feel, depends on this political division into small communities. Many of the States, it is well known, are divided into small counties; but this, I apprehend, is a less efficient and more inconvenient mode of transacting public business.

Worcester is one of these municipal corporations. We learn from its ancient records, that a proposal to establish a plantation at this place, then called Quinsigamond,* was made to the General Court, at its October session in 1668. A committee was appointed to inspect the place, who reported in favour of the plan, and proposed laying out a plantation about eight miles square, to be called Worcester, which they conjectured would accommodate ninety families, though they declared themselves under serious apprehension

* *Holden* and a large part of *Ward* were embraced in this territory, and for many years belonged to Worcester.

lest there should be a deficiency of meadow.* A grant of this territory was accordingly made to Capt. Daniel Gookin, Capt. Daniel Henchman, Capt. Thomas Prentice, and their associates. It appears from the records of this committee, that a settlement was commenced in 1674, but by what number of persons, and where, is problematical, as a war with the Indians soon broke out, and the settlers fled. It is also uncertain whether they suffered the loss of any lives from this war, which terminated in 1678. After the war had subsided and peace was restored, a second attempt was made to settle the place, but without success, till 1685, when a number of persons, under the authority of the grantees, made a new and more vigorous effort under more favourable auspices. The committee or grantees established many wholesome and salutary regulations, both for the preservation of the lives and property of the settlers. The land was mostly divided into lots of 10 and 25 acres, and provision was made for public worship and public schools; and it is also mentioned that a lot was to be reserved for a mill for the public use.† A tract of land, about half a mile square, was to be

* Meadow lands were esteemed of more value in the early settlement of this country than at this time, because they were almost entirely depended on by the settler for the support of his beast. Many tracts of this kind were found clear of timber, and productive in grass, having been burnt over until the timber was destroyed.

† The Mill, pursuant to the arrangement here referred to, was probably erected on the stream near the house of Stephen Salisbury, Esq. which stream was then generally called, as appears by the proprietors' records, Mill Brook, but frequently Bimeleck Brook.

laid out, and called the Citadel, within which the inhabitants were required to build their houses, that the population might more easily defend itself against incursion from the savages. They were also required to build within the Citadel public rooms, for the accommodation of travellers who passed upon the Connecticut road, as it was called, and also for the use of such persons as came to abide until they could build for themselves.* Under these regulations and the direction of the committee, the settlement went on prosperously for about fifteen years, when, in 1701, the Indians renewed hostilities, and prosecuted the war with such vigour and success that the town was entirely depopulated.

Little is known, at the present period, of the sufferings, privations and distress to which these early settlers were subjected during this war of extermination; but sufficient appears to convince us that they were in deep and sad affliction. Several persons were killed, and several children were carried into captivity:† the rest of the inhabitants abandoned their property, and fled to the more inhabited parts of the country. From this period till 1713, when peace was again

* Whether these regulations were observed and carried fully into effect, is perhaps uncertain. If such a territory was laid out, it must have embraced the northeast end and probably a large portion of the present village, as the settlers were directed to enclose in it the Mill.

† Three of Mr. Digory Sargent's children were carried into captivity at a very tender age; and, having grown up with the Indians, could never be persuaded to abandon their habits of life, and return to those of their friends and connexions: they however visited their relatives in 1726.

restored, the place was left waste and forsaken. Application was then made to the General Court for encouragement and direction in the re-settlement of the town. After some delay, the claims of the old settlers were adjusted, and some of them were persuaded to return: new ones were also prevailed on to take lots, so that in 1715 the town or plantation began to resume its former appearance.* From this time forward, it advanced steadily, without further interruption from the Indians.

Before leaving this early part of our history, I shall be pardoned if I recur for a moment to Capt. Gookin, who was placed at the head of the committee, and filled a large and important place in the events of which I have been speaking, though it is not probable he was ever an inhabitant of this town.——He was an Englishman by birth, and emigrated first to Virginia, but afterwards came to the colony of Massachusetts, and resided in Cambridge. He was a man distinguished for his stern integrity

* Mr. Jonas Rice, one of the former settlers, removed hither with his family, in October, 1713, where he remained until the Spring of 1715, and was then joined by a considerable number of planters. This intrepid person lived to a very advanced age, enjoying the confidence and sharing the honours of the town. In 1753 he was made a Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, and held the office until his decease, in the same year. The spot selected by him for a farm, and on which he lived, is the same now occupied by Mr. Sewall Rice, on the cross road leading from the Sutton to the Grafton road. The population was increased in 1718, by a large number of emigrants from Ireland: among them (according to his biographer) was Matthew Thornton, then a child, who afterwards, as a Delegate to the Continental Congress from New-Hampshire, signed the Declaration of Independence.

and religious devotion; and such was the confidence placed in his fidelity and discretion, that he was many years the chief agent of the colony in Indian affairs; and was often, in his excursions among the different tribes, the companion of the apostle Eliot. His disposition was kind and Christian, and his heart so filled with benevolence towards the natives, that he sacrificed his popularity in opposing the war with King Philip, and on that account unjustly fell into reproach. He visited most of the tribes in the colony, exerting to the utmost his power and influence in suppressing intemperance and other vices, and in improving their condition.—He wrote a treatise upon the habits, manners, customs and condition of the Indians, which he terms *Historical Collections*, and which is published among the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society. It is a highly creditable performance, both in the style and matter. He was also an unwavering advocate of popular rights, and was at the head of the party which opposed the invasion of the charter privileges of the colony by the crown. This gained him such credit that he was appointed a Major-General, and one of the magistracy, and he held the latter office when the charter was dissolved, in 1686. He died at Cambridge in 1687, a poor but honest man, much beloved and esteemed.——This brief notice of a man so distinguished for his virtues, and so connected with the early settlement of this town, appeared to me pertinent on this occasion.

The town was incorporated, by a resolve of the Legislature, in May, 1722; and the first town-meeting was held at the meeting-house, in September of the same year.*

In 1731, the county was established, and Worcester became the shire town.† It had its share of prosperity and adversity, in peace and in war; but nothing occurred which would seem to invite attention on this occasion, until we come to that time of trial which preceded the revolution. In speaking of the share which this town bore in the events of that period, I shall not claim for it any pre-eminence over other towns, for the cause was common—the injuries inflicted fell on all, and were repelled by all; and I may venture to assert that the world cannot produce stronger proof of an unceasing, fervent, devoted patriotism, than do the humble records of the towns of Massachusetts, during that war. It was a stern and enlightened people who stood forth in a holy cause. They justly considered every encroachment upon their rights, however trifling,

* See Appendix, (A.)

† The first session of a County Court was held in 1731. A court-house was erected in 1732, and placed near where the present building occupied for that purpose stands. In 1757, the Court ordered a new building to be erected, and to be placed on the same spot where the old one stood, and appointed a Committee for that purpose. In 1793, an order was passed for the erection of the spacious edifice in which the Courts are now held, and in which are all the County Offices.—The building first erected for a County Jail was the low part of the old tavern-house, owned by Stephen Salisbury, Esq. and recently destroyed by fire. This being found insufficient, the building a few feet south of it, now standing, and owned by Isaiah Thomas, Esq. was erected for a Prison, and was used as such until the stone edifice on the opposite side of the street was built.

as manifesting a disposition to abridge their privileges, and as a dangerous precedent for future innovation. They were therefore resolved to resist usurpation at the threshold, and to settle the question of right before any support in aid of an injury could be claimed by submission to it. Entertaining these sentiments, they opposed with vigour and success the stamp duties, and afterwards the duties upon tea, not because these taxes were so heavy as to be burdensome, for they probably did not affect materially the interests of the great mass of the community; but it was the right to tax, which they resisted. When these taxes were levied, the feelings of the colonies broke forth like a volcano, threatening ruin to those who advocated or enforced the odious measures.

In reference to the events which then occurred, I appeal to the recollection of those witnesses who are now living, and to the records of the towns of this Commonwealth, as furnishing unequivocal proof of a most ardent enthusiastic patriotism pervading the mass of the population.

In March, 1774, this town resolved, in town-meeting, not to buy, sell, or use tea, until the duty was repealed, and to break off all intercourse with such as should act counter to that resolution. In May following, they instructed their Representative,* to be firm in his opposition to the offensive acts of Parliament, and to resist to the utmost of his power all claims, if any should

* Joshua Bigelow, Esq.

be made, for allowance for the tea which was thrown into Boston harbour.

In October of the same year, they instructed their Representative *not to be sworn*, unless by an officer appointed according to the Provincial charter—and to refuse to give his attendance at Boston, while the town was invested with British troops and ships of war.

At the same meeting, they gave instructions to their Delegate* to the Provincial Congress, then about to be assembled at Concord; and I shall be pardoned if I quote a portion of this interesting document, as it illustrates the state of public sentiment before hostilities actually commenced. After enumerating the grievances of which they complained, they observe, "If all infractions on our rights by acts of the British Parliament be not redressed, and we restored to the full enjoyment of all our privileges contained in the charter of this province, granted by their late Majesties King William and Queen Mary, to a *punctilio*, BEFORE the day of your meeting,—that then, and in that case, you are to consider the people of this Province as *absolved* on their part from the obligation therein contained, and to all intents and purposes reduced to a state of nature; and you are to exert yourself in devising ways and means to raise from the dissolution of the old constitution, as from the ashes of the Phœnix, a new form, wherein all officers shall be depend-

* Col. Timothy Bigelow, the father of the late Timothy Bigelow, of Medford. Col. Bigelow commanded the 15th Regiment in the Massachusetts line.

ent on the suffrages of the people for their existence, as such, whatever unfavourable constructions our enemies may put upon such a procedure. The exigency of our public affairs leaves us no other alternative from a state of anarchy or slavery."*

These resolutions and instructions, it will be remembered, were adopted by the town in October, 1774, before hostilities had commenced, and they breathe a spirit of most resolute opposition, a most fixed and unbending determination never to compromise their rights. They amount to an unequivocal declaration of independence, and require their Delegate to assist in the formation of a new and popular form of government, unless every infraction of the rights of the colonists should be redressed before the Congress should meet. This is the language of defiance, the language of men driven by their adversaries to the wall, and determined to resist while there was life, and if the liberties of their country perished to perish with them.

We have heard much just praise bestowed upon the bold and overpowering eloquence of James Otis and Patrick Henry; but vehement and daring as they were, they could not have uttered their sentiments in a more decisive tone than do the humble records of Worcester those of its citizens. They could not have repelled aggression in a more resolute manner, nor more warily shunned the snares that were set for an

* See Appendix, (B.)

unsuspecting people. The inhabitants could not be brought in any manner, direct or indirect, to acquiesce in the usurpations of the crown.—They would not permit their Representative to be sworn by an officer not appointed according to the provisions of the provincial charter, nor to sit where the deliberations of the Legislature would be overawed by an armed force. Their resolution was, to yield no right, to submit to no infraction; and if they could not enjoy the privileges secured by the charter, to establish an independent government, and commit the issue to a just God, if an appeal to arms should ensue.

The proceedings of the town at this period furnish the most clear and indisputable proof that the inhabitants understood well their condition, and foresaw that force must be repelled by force, and that the probable issue would be a separation of the colonies from the parent country. We recur to the history of this crisis with a just and honest pride, and pray God, if like times of peril should come, to grant that we may have men of equal wisdom and firmness to maintain our rights.

But the patriotism of our inhabitants did not stop here. They were willing to spend and be spent in the cause, and sought no exemption from the promises and pledges they had given. They filled the ranks of the army with a large number of soldiers, furnishing in aid of the war their full quotas of men as they were demanded. They also, without waiting for a distribution of

the public burdens, voluntary raised large sums of money to defray the expenses of the war.* They bore, without repining, the severe burdens and distresses incident to the times, and laboured with their strength and means in the common cause, until the independence of the nation was acknowledged, and the principles for which they contended were established.

Most of the individuals who bore a share in the great events of that period are gathered to their fathers; but their memory will be cherished by a grateful people, and the age will come when the civilized nations of the earth will do homage to their patriotism. Those who are living know how honourable is the appellation of "a Soldier of the Revolution," and how enviable is the distinction acquired at that eventful crisis: they share the glory of having effected a change in the condition of man which has made him master of himself.

The occurrences since the Revolution are too much within the recollection of those now living to require any notice on this occasion.† The

* See Appendix, (C.)

† A gentleman of the age of 73 years, who is a native and an inhabitant of the town, says he can well recollect when there was but one dwelling-house on Front-Street, and but seven on Main-Street between the jail-bridge and the South Meeting-House—none on Mechanic, Thomas, School, Back, or the cross Streets. The house on Front-Street is now occupied by Mr. Nathaniel Eaton, as a tavern. On the east side of Main-Street was one standing where the Worcester Hotel is—one near where the Worcester Bank is—and that owned and occupied by the late Hon. Abraham Lincoln, deceased, was standing. On the west side of the street was one where Maj. Allen lives—one where the mansion of His Excellency Gov. Lincoln is—one near where the

town, unaided by any particular advantage, except that of being the centre of a thrifty and enterprizing population, has risen in wealth and numbers to a degree almost unequalled in the interior of New-England. It is now in its youth, and its growth is vigorous and healthy. What will be its future destinies remains to be disclosed by time. Should it become the head of inland navigation hence to the waters of the Narragansett, it is safe, without the gift of prophecy, to predict that this valley will be covered with population, and the exhilarating hurry and bustle of trade will pervade places that are now under the peaceful dominion of the farmer: the spires of new temples, dedicated to the worship of God, will rise up to greet the eye of the beholder: the mechanic arts, under new combinations of capital and skill, will take deeper and stronger root: the fine arts will find an abode among us; and our hills, under a better cultivation, will put on a gayer and more beautiful attire. This auspicious event we have great reason to believe is near at hand. The scruples of the most incredulous seem now to be removed;

Meeting-House of the Calvinist Society is—and that of the Hon. Oliver Fiske was standing. He also distinctly recollects having assisted in raising and gathering a crop of rye on the Ministerial Land, so called. This lot adjoined Main-Street, for a considerable distance north of the Worcester Hotel, and extended east to or near to Mill-Brook, being bounded on the south by what is now called Front-Street. In 1785, the greater part of it was divided into lots, and sold by the town. It embraced all Mechanic—all Cross Streets, numbered 1 and 2—nearly all the north side of Front-Street, and adjoined Main-Street, where is now the house of Austin Denny, Esq.—the Store of Messrs. Stiles & Butman, &c. This territory now contains a large portion of the population of the town.

and if we pursue it steadily, there is little doubt of its being accomplished.

The Building we are assembled to dedicate is said to be a beautiful display of architectural taste and proportions. The prompt and liberal manner in which the town raised the necessary funds, is highly creditable both to its enterprize and liberality. It is indeed no small praise that we have the materials and the mechanic skill necessary to construct this edifice within ourselves.

To the Building Committee the town is under obligations, for the assiduous and faithful manner in which they have discharged the laborious duties assigned to them.

We have, on the whole, no occasion to murmur, but much cause for rejoicing that our lines have been cast to us in pleasant places. Every thing around us is fresh and vigorous; and all before us is filled with the most gratifying hopes.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

THE following account of the measures adopted for the support of public worship is collected chiefly from the town records :—

A meeting-house was erected in 1719 ; and in October of that year Mr. Andrew Gardner was inducted into the pastoral office, and was dismissed in October, 1722. The causes of dissatisfaction do not appear, but there was a large majority for his removal. In March following, the town and church gave a call to the Rev. Shearjashub Bourne, and voted him a salary of £70 ; but as he was not settled, it is probable he declined the call. On the 25th of January, 1724-5, the town concurred with the church in its invitation to the Rev. Isaac Burr to settle with them, and he was ordained on the 13th of October following, and continued to officiate until 1744, when he was dismissed ; and to him succeeded the Rev. Thaddeus Maccarty, who was installed on the 10th of June, 1747, and officiated until his death, in 1784. Mr. Maccarty was succeeded by the Rev. Dr. Austin in 1790, who, having been elected President of the University of Vermont, was, at his own request, dismissed in 1815 ; and the Rev. Charles A. Goodrich was ordained in 1816, and, at his own request, was dismissed in 1820. The Rev. Arætius B. Hull, the present pastor, was ordained in 1821. These are the persons who have been settled in what is now denominated the First Parish. The present meeting-house was erected in 1759.

In 1785, a second Congregational parish was formed, and the Rev. Dr. Aaron Bancroft, in 1786, was ordained its pastor, and now officiates as such. In 1787, it was incorporated.

In 1812, a large number of persons formed themselves into a Baptist Church and Society, over which the Rev. Wil-

liam Bently was ordained pastor. In 1815, he took a dismission, and in the same year was succeeded by the Rev. Jonathan Going, the present minister. This Society has a meeting-house, and is incorporated.

In October, 1820, a church was organized, which has since been joined by a society, and both are now known under the name of the Calvinist Church and Society, over which the Rev. Loammi I. Hoadly was ordained pastor in October, 1823. This Society was incorporated in 1825.

The amount of money annually raised for the support of public worship is about $3,000.

SCHOOLS.

We have now 14 Schools sustained at the expense of the town, 6 of which are kept not less than 44 weeks, annually, and the residue about 24 weeks each. Six of these Schools are located in the centre district, *viz.* a Grammar School, under the superintendence of the Selectmen—three Primary Schools, in which children are taught the rudiments of education—a Second and Third School—all of which are under the care of a Board of Directors; and pupils are advanced from the Primary, in succession, to the highest School, as they advance in knowledge.

The venerable ex-President Adams, in 1755, taught a School in this town, in a house standing near where the Court-House is. A letter of his, bearing date October 12th, of that year, and published in the Monthly Anthology, was probably written while he resided here in that employment.

The amount of money annually raised for the support of free Schools is about $3,000.

The population of the town, in 1820, was 2964. It has increased very much since, and is now probably nearly 4000.

(B.)

The following are two of the documents referred to, page 21 :—

At a town-meeting, held on the 4th day of October, pursuant to a warrant dated the 26th of September, the town voted that Mr Joshua Bigelow, Representative for the town, have instructions for the rule of his conduct at the Great and General Court of this Province.

Voted also, That proper instructions be given to Mr. Timothy Bigelow, the Delegate chosen by the town to represent us at the Provincial Congress, to be convened at Concord on the second Tuesday in October, current.

Voted, That Messrs. David Bancroft, Jonathan Stone, Nathan Baldwin, Samuel Curtis, and Stephen Salisbury, be a Committee to draw up the two forementioned instructions, and make report to this meeting in two hours: which report being read, and the question being put whether the town would accept the same, it passed in the affirmative; and their report was as follows:—

Worcester, Oct. 4, 1774.

To Mr. Joshua Bigelow.

Sir—The town electors of the town of Worcester being greatly alarmed at the unconstitutional authority assumed by the British Parliament, in several of their late Acts, some of which already have [operated,] and others are intended to operate in this Province, to the entire subversion of all we hold valuable in our charter, (which we have an indubitable right to enjoy, by the laws of nature, and by the principles of the Christian religion, as well as by the compact contained in said charter)—Therefore, that the cruel Acts that have already been carried into execution, to the great detriment and distress of this Province, and dangerous to the inhabitants of the whole continent of America, may cease to operate any longer, to the entire stoppage of commerce with Great-Britain, and [to] the dishonour of his Majesty and the Parliament; and that those other Acts which have not yet operated may be prevented from ever being carried into execution, and we thereby [be] reduced to pay obedience to the Acts of any future venal, corrupt administration, which may deprive us of life and property with impunity; [and] for the prevention whereof, and the security of all and every of our natural and charter rights, we have chosen you to represent us in the Great and General Court of this Province, reposing special trust in your wisdom and fortitude, [and do] give you the following instructions as the rule of your conduct respecting the particulars hereafter mentioned, and [do direct you] not to recede from the most rigid virtue in recovering and defending all other our rights and liberties herein not expressly mentioned, that may come under your consideration:—

1. Agreeable to the recommendation of the Committee of Correspondence for this County, in Convention, we instruct you absolutely to refuse to be sworn by any officer or officers but such as are or may be appointed according to the consti-

tution, or to act as one branch of the Legislature, in concert with any other, except such as are or may be appointed and supported according to the charter of this Province; and that you refuse to give your attendance at Boston while the town is invested with troops and ships of war. And should there be any thing to prevent your acting with such a Governor and Council as is expressly set forth in the charter, that then you immediately repair to the town of Concord, and there join in a Provincial Congress, with such other members as are or may be chosen for that purpose, to act and determine on such measures as you shall judge proper to extricate this Colony out of its unhappy circumstances.

Thus far, Sir, has the body of this County resolved, as proper instructions for the Representatives that might be chosen in their several towns to meet at Salem, the former part of which we should have adopted verbatim, with the addition of several other articles as proper rules for you to have observed as a Member of the Great and General Court, provided you had not been excused and discharged therefrom by the Governor's proclamation: the latter we do adopt as proper to direct you to attend at Concord aforesaid, with Mr. Timothy Bigelow, [whom] we have chosen to represent us in the Provincial Congress to be holden there; and strictly [to] adhere to the instructions given him for the rule of your conduct in said Congress, respecting the particulars therein contained.

By order of the Committee,
DAVID BANCROFT, *Chairman.*

To Mr. Timothy Bigelow.

Sir—As you are delegated to represent the inhabitants of the town of Worcester in a Provincial Congress to be convened at Concord on the second Tuesday of October, instant, the following is offered and enjoined upon you as the instructions of us your constituents, which you are to observe and follow, as a member of said Congress, *to wit:*—As the first charter given to this Colony was violated, and as we think wrongfully wrested from us by Great-Britain, and [as] our second and late charter is nullified and destroyed by late Acts of the British Parliament, *to wit:* by their assuming the authority of making laws binding upon us in all cases whatever; and to enforce our compliance [therewith, by their] having sent ships of war, and blocked the port and harbour of our metropolis, and [by their having placed] troops in hostile array to dragoon the people [into these measures,] and [by their having made] the Governor independent of the people for

his support, and [by their having] * * * * our capital in such a manner as may reduce the worthy inhabitants to a military government—therefore, that you endeavour, in the most peaceable way, to obtain a redress of the following grievances :—

First. That the port and harbour of Boston be opened, and the freedom of trade restored; and the King's troops be removed out of this Province; and the command of the Fortification, (so called) at the south end of Boston, be resigned to the inhabitants; and the Commander of the King's troops be prohibited from erecting any fortress or making any intrenchments within the town of Boston, or near any of the avenues leading to it.

Second. That the Province store of ammunition, lately removed by the King's troops from the arsenal in Charlestown, be returned to the place from whence it was taken, or into the care of such person or persons as you shall appoint to receive and keep the same, for the use of this Province; and that all the ammunition in the Magazine in Boston be delivered to the proper owners, if by them requested.

Third. That every of those incorrigible enemies to the country who have lately been appointed, by mandamus from his Majesty, as Counsellors, and have accepted a seat at the Council Board of this Province, and shall not resign their said office of Counsellor before the second Tuesday of this instant, be impeached as traitors to the Constitution of this Province, and that they be taken into custody, and secured for trial.

Fourth. That you endeavour that the Provincial Congress depute an agent or agents from that body, to go to Canada, and there treat with the inhabitants, in the name and on the behalf of the people of this Province, and establish such rules of conduct to be observed by them and us, as may be for the mutual benefit of both; and give assurance to them, on our part, of that friendship which some of their inhabitants have nobly displayed in a late generous donation to the oppressed, suffering poor of Boston, for which we would in this public manner return our grateful thanks, and which we would willingly refund in the same species, if a change of circumstances required it, which God grant may never be the case with any of our generous benefactors.

Fifth. That if all infractions on our rights by Acts of the British Parliament be not redressed, and we restored to the full enjoyment of all our privileges contained in the charter of this Province, granted by their late Majesties, King William and Queen Mary, to a punctilio, before the day of your

meeting,—that then and in that case you are to consider the people of this Province as absolved on their part from the obligation therein contained, and to all intents and purposes reduced to a state of nature; and you are to exert yourself in devising ways and means to raise from the dissolution of the old constitution, as from the ashes of the Phœnix, a new form, wherein all officers shall be dependent on the suffrages of the people for their existence, as such, whatever unfavourable constructions our enemies may put upon such a procedure. The exigency of our public affairs leaves us no other alternative from a state of anarchy or slavery.

Sixth. You are to give diligent attention to the advice and result which you may receive from the Continental Congress, now sitting at Philadelphia; as we shall esteem it the greatest happiness to have the approbation of our sister Colonies in all matters respecting our mode of government; and therefore if your advices from said Congress should not perfectly coincide with these our instructions respecting the mode of government for this Province, you are to desist from acting any further on that matter, until you have our further instructions—any thing herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding.

Seventh. That whereas the commissioned officers in the militia of this Province have generally resigned their commissions, and the people have formed themselves into military companies, and chosen officers of their respective companies, field-officers, &c.—notwithstanding all which it is highly necessary that there be a Captain-General to preside over the whole—we therefore instruct you that you endeavour that there be such a Captain-General advised to, by the Provincial Congress, as soon as may be.

Eighth. The foregoing you are to adhere to and religiously observe in all respects, according to the nature of your office, and as the way and means for the recovery and defence of our rights, liberties and privileges.

By order of the Committee,

DAVID BANCROFT, *Chairman.*

(C.)

Measures adopted in Support of the War.

I shall do little else than transcribe the substance of the votes of the town upon this subject. The records, however,

furnish but an imperfect account of the efforts and sacrifices which were made.

The first vote upon the town books, touching this subject, was passed on the 13th of March, 1777, by which a Committee was raised to ascertain how much each inhabitant had contributed towards supporting the war, and how much those were deficient who ought to contribute. Those deficient are directed by the vote to pay the arrears into the hands of the committee, to be appropriated with the monies already raised to fill up *the battalions on the Continental establishment.* Voted, also, £20 bounty to each soldier who should enlist into the Continental army towards the quota of Worcester, over and above the State and Continental bounty.

April 3, 1777. Voted to raise, by tax upon the inhabitants, £1656 2*s.* 2*d.* 2*f.* to defray the expenses of the war, and to pay the men enlisted by the town to fill the battalions.

Nov. 10, 1777. Voted to raise £20 for each of the remaining eight men enlisted to make up the town's quota for the Continental army.

Dec. 29, 1777. A committee was raised to take care of the families of the soldiers belonging to the town and serving in the Continental army.

It also appears, by a number of votes previous to this time, that the town furnished the soldiers with clothing.

March 15, 1779. Voted to raise, by tax, £2000 to support the war; and a committee was appointed to procure men for the public service.

May 20, 1779. A committee was raised to take care of and make provision for the families of non-commissioned officers and soldiers, who were serving for the town in the continental army.

June 23, 1779. A committee was appointed to hire money, on the credit of the town, to pay the soldiers.

July 12, 1779. The town granted £5200, to defray the expenses of the war, and to hire soldiers to go into the service.

August, 1779. £892 was granted to pay for clothing for the soldiers.

Sept. 21, 1779. £633 was granted, to pay eight soldiers, who were sent to join the army at Rhode-Island.

Oct. 18, 1779. Voted to enlist thirteen men to join Gen. Washington, at Claverack, on Hudson's river, who received a bounty of £30 each, and were supported by the town.

May 29, 1780. £750 was granted for hiring soldiers.

June 14, 1780. A committee was instructed to engage 22 soldiers for the town, to join the Continental army.

July 10, 1780. Voted to procure 12 horses for the use of the Continental army.

July 20, 1780. £30,000 was granted to pay the six months and the three months men.

Oct. 23, 1780. £529 was granted to procure beef for the army.

Dec. 5, 1780. £1270 3*s.* 3*d.* was granted to procure beef for the soldiers.

Jan. 16, 1781. £339 was granted to settle the contracts with the three and six months men.

Most of the above sums, it is probable, were paid in a depreciated currency, or in what is usually denominated Continental paper money.

July, 1781. A committee was appointed to raise men to join the army at Rhode-Island. £400, in gold and silver, was granted, to purchase beef for the army. At an adjournment of the same meeting, the further sum of £414, in gold and silver, was granted, to pay soldiers.

August, 1781. Granted £197 17*s.* in gold and silver, to pay for horses furnished for the army.

August, 1781. £116, in gold and silver, was granted, to pay for clothing.

The limits assigned to this publication will not allow of a further detail of votes; and these can only be interesting as furnishing proof of the novel methods resorted to, to maintain an army, and of a most intense patriotism. Every town seemed to be an independent sovereignty, acting under the *advice* of the Provincial Congress, which again acted under the *advice* of the Continental Congress. The bond of union which held the towns and the Provinces together was *necessity;* for there was no political compact, and it is surprising that a confederacy held together by so feeble a tie should have acted with so much energy, and have submitted to such heavy burdens and privations, without defection.

To form a correct estimate of the aid contributed by the inhabitants of Worcester, and of the extent of their sacrifices, it should be remembered that the population and wealth was not probably equal to one half what it now is. It should also be recollected that the town was divided into classes, and each class was required to furnish and pay, by an assessment upon its members, such a number of soldiers for the army as was called for; and in this and many other ways the inhabitants were subjected to burdens and sacrifices which are not mentioned on the records, and which none but a patriotic, a devoted people could have borne. The remembrance of these municipal exertions seems to be fast sinking into oblivion. The triumphant result has so filled the public mind

with joy, that none but the principal actors in the great drama are now recollected.

Before leaving this subject, I will add a few words as to the manner of classing the citizens, for the purpose of raising and maintaining an army. I find that the subject was first brought before the town in December, 1780; and a vote was passed not to class the citizens, but to raise the quota required, and pay them by a general assessment. Several unsuccessful attempts were made, at different meetings, to reconsider this vote, until February 5, 1781, when it was reconsidered, and a committee appointed to class the inhabitants. This, it appears was immediately done by the committee, and each of these classes was required to keep, at its own expense, a soldier in the army. The number of classes cannot be accurately ascertained, but it was probably between twenty and thirty.

I have been kindly furnished with the original papers and documents of one of the classes, by a member of it, Capt. Daniel Goulding, and shall here transcribe a portion of them, that the detail of this singular method of recruiting troops may be kept in remembrance.

The following is a copy of a document signed by David Bigelow, Chairman of the above committee, shewing the names of the persons belonging to the class, the number of polls set to each, and the amount each was probably assessed in some previous town tax :—

"Persons' Names in this Class.	Polls.	Polls pay Silver Money.	Total of Real and Personal Estate and Polls, in Silver Money.
Palmer Goulding	4	1 : 0 : 0	4 : 18 : 11
Charles Stearns and Jonathan Gates	2	0 : 10 : 0	5 : 1 : 5
John Smith	1	0 : 5 : 0	0 : 16 : 8
Simeon *Dunkin*	1	0 : 5 : 0	0 : 5 : 5
Nahum Willard	1	0 : 5 : 0	1 : 3 : 6
Daniel Goulding	1	0 : 5 : 0	0 : 17 : 10
Nathan Perry	2	0 : 10 : 0	3 : 2 : 3
Isaac Willard	2	0 : 10 : 0	2 : 2 : 3
	14		18 : 8 : 3

DAVID BIGELOW, *per order.*

Worcester, 8 *Feb.* 1781."

The sums here set down are in pounds, shillings, and pence; and it appears probable from this document that some previous assessment of taxes was taken as a guide or scale, and that the whole tax of the town thus assessed was divided by the number

of soldiers to be raised by the town. This division gave the above sum. This being ascertained, a number of individuals were selected from the tax list, to compose a class whose taxes in the same assessment were found to amount to or near to £18 : 8 : 3, and each was required to contribute in proportion to the amount paid by him in such former assessment. This is however conjecture, and I have not the means of ascertaining the exact method adopted.

The following are the articles of enlistment:—

"I the subscriber do enlist myself into the service of the United States of America, (for and in behalf of the class in the town of Worcester whereof Palmer Goulding is first named) to continue in that service for the term of three years, unless sooner regularly discharged—to be under the command of the General Officers of the United States of America, which are or may be appointed, and faithfully to observe and obey all such orders as I shall from time to time receive from my officers, and to be under such regulations in every respect as are or may be provided for the army of the United States. (Signed) DAVID THOMAS, Jr.

Witness * * *.

Worcester, March 10th, 1781."

It appears by the original contract in my possession that the class was to pay Mr. Thomas £34 : 10, silver money, annually.

The next document shews that he was mustered and accepted:—

"This may certify, that I have this day received David Thomas, Jr. to serve as a Continental Soldier for the term of three years, for the class where Palmer Goulding is first named; and I have delivered him to the Superintendent of this County. I say, received by me,

(Signed) JOSHUA WHITNEY, *Captain.*

Worcester, March 23d, 1781."

The next document shews that he served until 1783, when he was probably regularly discharged, as the war was then drawing to a close:—

"This certifies, that David Thomas, Corporal in the 5th Massachusetts Regiment, has served in said Regiment from the 10th of March, 1781, till the 10th of March, 1783, it being two years.

MOSES KNAPP, *Major & Commander*
5th Mass. Regiment.

Cantonment near New-Windsor,
March the 10th, 1783."

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The person here named as enlisted, is General Thomas, of Providence, who has since represented the State of New-York, in Congress, and has also held important offices under the government of that State.

I shall close this article with a comparative view of the population and the number of troops furnished by each State, during the war of the Revolution :—

STATES.	Population in 1782.	TROOPS. Continental.	Militia.	Total.	Proport. of whole Popu.
Massachusetts,	390,000	68,007	15,155	83,162	about $\frac{1}{5}$
Connecticut,	208,000	32,029	7,792	39,821	" $\frac{1}{5}$
Rhode-Island,	50,000	5,908	4,284	10,192	" $\frac{1}{5}$
N. Hampshire,	100,000	12,496	2,093	14,589	" $\frac{1}{7}$
New-Jersey,	140,000	10,726	6,055	16,781	" $\frac{1}{8}$
Maryland,	180,000	13,912	4,127	18,039	" $\frac{1}{10}$
New-York,	230,000	18,331	3,304	21,635	" $\frac{1}{11}$
Pennsylvania,	380,000	25,322	7,357	32,679	" $\frac{1}{12}$
Virginia,	380,000	26,668	5,620	32,288	" $\frac{1}{12}$
S. Carolina,	100,000	6,417		6,417	" $\frac{1}{16}$
N. Carolina,	250,000	7,263		7,263	" $\frac{1}{33}$
Georgia,	70,000	2,679		2,679	" $\frac{1}{26}$
	2,478,000	232,075	56,163	288,238	

It appears by this Table that the number of troops furnished by this State is more than twice as large as that furnished by any other State. It consisted of almost one-fifth part of the whole population.——If it could also be ascertained what sum of money was expended by the inhabitants of Massachusetts in that war, it would be a most interesting fact, both to the present and future generations.——The above Table is made up from data contained in the Columbian Centinel of August 14 and 18, 1813.

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